

Tobacco regulation

Protection of children

Since 1 October 2007 it has been **illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18** (previously 16). **A ban on sales of tobacco from vending machines** to reduce youth access entered into force in October 2011.

In February 2014, Parliament passed an amendment to the Children and Families Bill allowing the Government to introduce regulations making it an **offence to smoke in a private vehicle carrying children** (England and Wales). These regulations were approved in February 2015 and entered into force on the 1st October 2015.

Three other amendments were passed enabling the Government to introduce regulations:

- requiring **standardised packaging** for tobacco products (throughout the UK) which came into effect on 20th May 2016
- making it an **offence to sell e-cigarettes to children under 18** - (England and Wales) which entered into force on 1st October 2015
- making it an **offence for an adult to buy tobacco or e-cigarettes for under 18s** - a practice known as proxy purchasing (England and Wales) - which also entered into force on 1st October 2015.

Tobacco Advertising and promotion

All forms of tobacco advertising and promotion are banned in the UK including the display of tobacco products at the point of sale.

Consumer protection

The UK government introduced **picture warnings on cigarette packs** in October 2008. Since October 2010 picture warnings have been required on other smoked tobacco products.

The 2001 EU Tobacco Products Directive set a **maximum upper limit of tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide for cigarettes** sold in the European Union. The directive also banned such words as 'light' or 'mild' as part of a brand name, unless authorised by Member States.

A new EU Tobacco Products Directive took effect on 20 May 2016. This requires **picture warnings covering 65% of both sides, placed at the top of the pack**. Other measures include: a ban on distinguishable flavours, including menthol; the regulation of e-cigarettes; and measures to reduce tobacco smuggling. Cigarettes are to be sold in packs containing a minimum of 20 sticks. Some of the measures will be phased in.

In the UK, regulations requiring **standardised packaging** entered into force on 20th May 2016 at the same time as the EU Tobacco Products Directive. This means that the appearance of all tobacco packs will be standardised including the colour of the pack. In the UK, tobacco companies have until 19th May 2017 to fully comply with the EU Directive and standardised packaging regulations.

Smoking in public places and workplaces

Smoking in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces is prohibited by law throughout the United Kingdom.

There are a few exemptions to the law. These include guest bedrooms in hotels and certain rooms in care homes, hospices and prisons.

Tax and smuggling

Rates of duty on tobacco products are determined by UK and European law.

All tobacco products sold in the UK are required to have a 'UK Duty Paid' marking to help distinguish legitimate products from smuggled goods.

Tobacco companies are required by law to ensure that their practices do not facilitate smuggling.

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

The FCTC is the first global health treaty and was initiated by the World Health Organization.

The treaty seeks to set internationally agreed minimum standards on tobacco control and to ensure international co-operation on matters such as the illegal trade of tobacco. The United Kingdom and European Union are Parties to the Convention.

For more information: www.who.int/fctc/en/